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RUEH BY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1499
RUEH DK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1857
RUEH KM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2278
RUEH NR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4709
RUEA IIA/CIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMF ISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEH GV/USMISSION GENEVA 1368
RHEH AAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000555

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR S. HILL
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: HARARE: ELECTION DAY SITREP

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

Embassy Observation

¶1. (SBU) The Embassy sent four observer teams throughout Harare in the morning and three teams in the afternoon, including one led by the Ambassador. We had not sought accreditation, nor did we attempt to observe outside of Harare in light of the MDC's withdrawal from the election.

¶2. (C) Harare has been calm the entire day. Voter turnout in general was greatly reduced from that of the March 29 elections. Turnout appeared dependent on the control ZANU-PF had been able to exercise in particular areas. In Hatcliff, for example, which has been the scene of significant violence, turnout was relatively high, but in most other areas it was low. Many people were afraid to talk with us, and fear was palpable. Those people who did talk with us told us ZANU-PF had attempted to intimidate them into voting through what has been termed "Operation Red Finger." Voters dip their fingers in long-lasting ink after voting, and there are reports that ZANU-PF will gather people tomorrow to inspect their fingers; punishment will be imposed on those who did not vote. Additionally some voters were told to provide ZANU-PF officials with the serial number of their ballots; presumably their votes could later be checked.

¶3. (C) Despite the intimidation and threats, a number of people told us they would refuse to vote. Others said they would vote but would submit spoiled ballots. While there have been only few and scattered reports of violence throughout Zimbabwe today, we are concerned that ZANU-PF could renew its reign of terror tomorrow, seeking retribution against MDC supporters who did not vote, or voted the wrong way. We will closely monitor the situation.

Tsvangirai Briefing

¶4. (SBU) MDC president Morgan Tsvangirai briefed the press and diplomats this afternoon. He called the election illegitimate, said he was heartened that a growing number of African leaders were standing with the Zimbabwean people, and unsurprisingly condemned Mugabe as a violent dictator who was trying to intimidate Africa and the world.

¶5. (SBU) On next steps, Tsvangirai said there should be widespread acceptance that the election was illegitimate and an international campaign to isolate the regime. He said he was ready to negotiate, but it should be on the basis that Mugabe was illegitimate and that he (Tsvangirai) had won the March election. Finally, he said the focus should be on a transition process and not a new election.

¶6. (SBU) Turning to South African president Thabo Mbeki, Tsvangirai said he had expressed his discontent about Mbeki's role in the SADC mediation process to SADC and in a letter to Mbeki. The destiny of Zimbabwe should not rest with one man, averred Tsvangirai, and he urged a negotiation process that would include the UN, AU, and other SADC leaders as mediators. Finally, Tsvangirai said he had heard that Mbeki would recognize Mugabe's election. This would be "outrageous."

¶7. (SBU) Tsvangirai emphasized the important role he believed SADC had in a resolution of the Zimbabwe crisis. He had never seen SADC so unified, and he believed there was a common understanding on the part of SADC that the crisis was a result of Mugabe's misgovernance and intransigence.

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¶8. (C) Tsvangirai confirmed that he is still residing at the Dutch Embassy; he is evaluating his security. (NOTE: In a live interview with CNN after the briefing, Tsvangirai said he will remain in Zimbabwe; he has no plans to leave. END NOTE.) He said he would not attend the AU Summit in Egypt; an MDC delegation is already there.

¶9. (C) According to Tsvangirai, MDC secretary-general Tendai Biti, who was released on bail yesterday, is at his home. The MDC was considering moving him to a more secure environment.

South African Embassy IDPs

¶10. (C) After the South African ambassador insisted that about 340 MDC supporters who had taken refuge in the parking lot of the Embassy had to depart; UN and MDC representatives persuaded the IDPs they would be safe if they left. The refugees departed this evening for the town of Ruwa, east of Harare, where there is a vocational training facility. The IDPs were accompanied by IOM and IFRC representatives. In Ruwa, they will be cared for by the national Red Cross.

Jenny Williams

¶11. (SBU) Embassy continues to monitor detentions of regime opponents. Tendai Biti was released yesterday, and MDC MP and lawyer Eric Matinenga was released earlier in the week. WOZA leader Jenny Williams remains in custody; we will attempt to visit her next week and report on her welfare. We note that there are hundreds, if not thousands of persons unlawfully detained, who do not have the benefit of the international spotlight.

McGee